Set in an abbey which "is small but rich," Umberto Eco's The Name of the Rose centers on the topics of lust and excess (33). Not only do the various discussions of poverty emphasize this theme and form a subplot to the story, but the ideas of desire for knowledge, power, and wealth intertwine to form the substance of the work. Images of physical excess and gluttony pepper the narrative, highlighting the reoccurring central themes. While Eco introduces many forms of lust, the three primary types of excess are material, physical, and intellectual. These subsequent themes provide the basis for a general discussion on the use of knowledge and reason in guiding one's actions.

"A rich abbey," William remarks at the beginning of the narrative as he and Adso climb the mountain towards their goal. As he continues with the information that "the abbot likes a great display on public occasions," the reader gathers the first hints of the importance of beauty and riches to the monks that reside within the walls of the abbey. Juxtaposed with the debate on poverty that continuously arises throughout the narrative, the riches of the abbey appear grossly exorbitant. The abbot, however, proclaims that "these riches that you see and others you will see later, are the heritage of centuries of piety and devotion, testimony to the power and holiness of this abbey," and are thus integral to one's understanding of the community (142). He continues by stating that the monks "believe it useful and fitting not to hide, but on the contrary to proclaim divine generosity." Not only do the monks enjoy these incredible objects of beauty, but the abbot claims to justify their possessions with the remark "we are convinced that homage must also be paid

Ironically, this series only to further his role as protagonist, since the "author" dictated that he should sleep with the heroine's sister in the previous chapter, "... he must encounter some other woman on his way. Perhaps the Other Reader could have a sister..." (p. 198). He also acts as a means of detaching the reader from the novel since he is referred to as "you," "Reader," or simply "protagonist." "You're the absolute protagonist of this book." (p. 219). This makes it impossible for the reader to identify with the protagonist because the reader does not, cannot honestly believe themselves to be the protagonist, especially if someone or thing keeps telling them they are.

Ludamilla is the heroine of our novel and, lacking a personality, has a clear cut function. She acts as the woman that our protagonist will fall in love with and as a means of getting our protagonist closer (or further) from the end of the ten novels. Every time he finds a new novel that might solve the riddle of the missing ending he is enthusiastic to share his discovery with Ludamilla. He, in essence, makes the journey for her. She appears to possibly have a very cold, detached personality. She hurts the protagonist's feelings by saying, "'There's no need for both of us to confront them. You go and then report,'" (p. 46) telling him to go to the publisher's alone. But after a close examination it is not a cold personality she...